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Melksham Urban District Council



THE
ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Medical Officer of Health

and the

Public Health Inspector

for the Year 1959

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To the Chairman and Members of the

MELKSHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report for 1959 on the health of the Melksham Urban District.

During the early part of the year, in common with the rest of the country, there was a sharp increase in the number of cases of measles, but, otherwise the health of the District has remained good. No cases of poliomyelitis have been reported and poliomyelitis immunisation has continued throughout the year.

An important addition to the amenities of Melksham and the surrounding area has been the "Blue Pool" swimming bath. Particular mention should be made of the benefit derived from the swimming bath by the organised attendances of the local schools.

I wish to thank the Members of the Council and particularly the Health Committee for the encouragement given me during the year and my colleagues for their valuable assistance, with especial reference to the Public Health Inspector, Mr. Acres, and to my Clerk, Mrs. Lewinski.

I am,

Your obedient servant,

P. J. SPELLER,

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY

Medical Officer of Health:

P. J. SPELLER, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,
who is also Medical Officer of Health to Bradford and
Melksham Rural District and Assistant County Medical
Officer of Health.

Office: 1 King Street, Melksham. Tel. Melksham 2307

Public Health Inspector:

W. F. ACRES, M.A.P.H.I., A.R.S.H.

Office: 1 King Street, Melksham. Tel. Melksham 2307

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area of the District (Acres)	...	...	...	1,042
Estimated Population	...	...	...	7,460
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	2,600
Rateable Value	...	...	...	£118,607
Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	...	£477

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS

The following statistics have been compiled from information received from the Registrar General:—

Births

Live Births

<i>Births</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	81	69	150
Illegitimate	3	1	4
Total number of live births ...	84	70	154

Birth Rate for the District (i.e. per 1,000 population) ...	19.6
Comparative figure for England and Wales	16.5

Still Births

<i>Births</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total number of still births ...	1	2	3

Still Birth Rate for the District per 1,000 total Live and Still Births	19.1
Comparative figure for England and Wales	20.7

Deaths

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number of Deaths in the Area ...	46	40	86
Local Death Rate (i.e., per 1,000 population)		...	13.37
Comparative figure for England and Wales ...		...	11.6

Infant Mortality

Deaths of Infants under 1 year

<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	—	1	1
Illegitimate	—	—	—
Total number of deaths ...	—	1	1

Deaths of Infants under 4 weeks of age ... Nil

Infant Mortality Rates

Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births—Total	...	6.5
Comparative figure for England and Wales ...	...	22.0

Causes of Deaths

The causes of deaths classified according to the Registrar General's system, are given in the following table:—

			<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Tuberculosis (respiratory) ...	...	...	—	—	—
(other) ...	...	...	—	—	—
Syphilitic disease ...	...	...	—	—	—
Diphtheria ...	...	...	—	—	—
Whooping Cough ...	...	...	—	—	—
Meningococcal infections ...	...	...	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis ...	...	...	—	—	—
Measles ...	...	...	—	—	—
Other Infective and Parasitic disease ...	...	...	—	—	—
Malignant Neoplasm (stomach) ...	...	...	—	1	1
(lung bronchus) ...	...	...	1	—	1
(breast) ...	...	...	—	2	2
(uterus) ...	...	...	—	—	—
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms ...	...	...	2	5	7
Leukaemia, aleukaemia ...	...	...	1	1	2
Diabetes ...	...	...	—	—	—
Vascular lesions of nervous system ...	...	...	7	8	15
Coronary disease, Angina ...	...	...	11	3	14
Hypertension with heart disease ...	...	...	—	—	—
Other heart disease ...	...	...	7	10	17
Other circulatory disease ...	...	...	6	2	8
Influenza ...	...	...	—	—	—
Pneumonia ...	...	...	—	1	1
Bronchitis ...	...	...	2	1	3
Other diseases of the respiratory system ...	...	...	1	1	2
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum ...	...	...	—	—	—
Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea ...	...	...	1	2	3
Nephritis and Nephrosis ...	...	...	—	—	—
Hyperplasia of prostate ...	...	...	1	—	1
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion ...	...	...	—	—	—
Congenital malformations ...	...	...	—	—	—
Other defined and ill defined diseases ...	...	...	5	2	7
Motor vehicle accidents ...	...	...	—	—	—
All other accidents ...	...	...	—	1	1
Suicide ...	...	...	1	—	1
Homicide and Operations of War ...	...	...	—	—	—
Totals			46	40	86

Age and Sex Incidence of Deaths from Heart and Arterial Disease

THESE TABLES HAVE BEEN COMPILED FROM LOCAL INFORMATION

Under 30		Under 40		Under 50		Under 60		Under 70		Under 80		Under 90		Over 90	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	—	—	—	2	1	6	4	7	3	5	8	9	6	1	1

Age and Sex Incidence of Deaths from Cancer

Location of Cancer	Under 30		Under 40		Under 50		Under 60		Under 70		Under 80		Under 90		Over 90	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Cancer of Bowel ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cancer of Breast ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cancer of Lung ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cancer of Stomach	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Alimentary (other	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
than above)																
Genital ...																
Reproductive	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Miscellaneous	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

OUTLINE OF THE HEALTH SERVICES OPERATING IN THE AREA

Laboratory Facilities

The Public Health Laboratory, Manor Hospital, Bath, undertakes all necessary bacteriological and pathological examinations in the district.

The laboratory with its skilled staff, provides a most valuable service with regard to the examination of drinking water, food and milk samples, throat swabs, etc., and their willing co-operation and expert advice is much appreciated.

Hospital Facilities

The South-Western Regional Hospital Board is responsible for hospital facilities in this district.

The two hospitals in the area are a general hospital at Melksham, and a hospital for the chronic sick at Semington. Other general hospitals are situated in the neighbouring towns, with larger ones in Bath and Bristol.

Melksham Hospital with its very pleasant surroundings admits a wide variety of medical and surgical cases and is a most efficient and well-run unit of 42 beds. Melksham is indeed fortunate in having so excellent and so modern a hospital with such exceptional amenities at its disposal.

The nearest hospital for the treatment of common infectious disease is Bath Isolation Hospital. The nearest Smallpox Hospital is at Bristol.

County Health Facilities

The following health services operating in the district are provided by the County Health Committee:—

Care of expectant and nursing mothers and young children.

Domiciliary Midwifery.

Health Visiting.

Home Nursing.

Arrangements for vaccination and immunisation.

Ambulances and ambulance cars.

Domestic Helps.

Arrangements under Part III of the National Health Service Act for the prevention of illness; care and after-care; and health education.

Mental Health Service.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Comparison with Previous Years

<i>Disease</i>	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959
Scarlet Fever	3	—	4	2	2	4
Whooping Cough	9	99	17	57	1	19
Poliomyelitis—Paralytic	2	—	—	—	1	—
Non-paralytic	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	1	232	4	19	5	287
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia	—	1	—	1	1	—
Dysentery	—	—	—	1	—	3
Salmonellosis	2	1	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	1	1	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia neonatorum	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal pyrexia	1	1	—	—	1	—
Meningococcal infection	—	—	1	—	—	—
Tuberculosis	5	7	4	3	2	1

Analysis under Age Groups

The distribution of cases according to age and sex are shown in the following tables.

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Scarlet Fever</i>		<i>Whooping Cough</i>		<i>Acute Poliomyelitis</i>		<i>Measles</i>		<i>Dysentery</i>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	—	—	1	1	—	—	2	2	—	—
1-2 years	—	—	—	2	—	—	19	12	—	—
3-4 years	—	—	4	1	—	—	35	36	—	—
5-9 years	1	—	5	5	—	—	87	85	1	—
10-14 years	1	2	—	—	—	—	1	3	—	—
15-24 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1
Not known	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	—	—
TOTAL	2	2	10	9	—	—	147	140	2	1

<i>Age Groups</i>	<i>Pneumonia</i>		<i>Salmonellosis</i>		<i>Erysipelas</i>		<i>Puerperal Pyrexia</i>		<i>Tuberculosis</i>		<i>Meningococcal Inf.</i>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 5 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5-14 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15-44 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
45-64 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not known	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—

Poliomyelitis

No cases of poliomyelitis were reported.

Tuberculosis

NEW CASES

					<i>No. of cases</i>
1954	...	...	...	...	5
1955	...	...	...	...	7
1956	...	...	...	...	4
1957	...	...	...	...	3
1958	...	...	...	...	2
1959	...	...	...	...	1

Distribution of new cases according to age, sex, and localisation of disease, is as follows:—

<i>Age Periods</i>	<i>New Cases</i>		<i>Deaths</i>	
	<i>Pulmonary</i>	<i>Non-Pulmonary</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>	<i>M.</i>	<i>F.</i>
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—
1-5 years	—	—	—	—
6-15 years	—	—	—	—
16-25 years	—	1	—	—
26-35 years	—	—	—	—
36-45 years	—	—	—	—
46-55 years	—	—	—	—
56-65 years	—	—	—	—
Over 65	—	—	—	—
Unknown	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	—	1	—	—

From the above table it will be seen that 1 case of pulmonary tuberculosis was notified during 1959. No deaths from tuberculosis were recorded.

Housing of Tuberculosis Patients

Cases are from time to time referred by the Chest Physician for consideration for re-housing. These cases are classified as follows:—

Certificate No. 1. Sputum-positive cases where re-housing is considered urgent for the prevention of infection.

Certificate No. 2. Where better housing would be desirable in order to improve and maintain the patient's health.

Certificate No. 3. Where improved housing would be beneficial but is not an urgent matter.

One certificate No. 2 was received during the year. The family is now re-housed.

Mass Radiography

The results of the survey held in Melksham in July are as follows:—

<i>Premises</i>	<i>Total Films</i>		<i>Active Tuberculosis</i>		<i>Inactive Tuberculosis</i>		<i>Other Conditions</i>	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Assembly Hall. Melksham	547	438	1	1	4	5	5	6
Avon India Rubber Co., Ltd. Spencer (Melksham) Ltd.	1313	349	—	—	5	2	14	3
Wilts United Dairies Ltd.	197	24	—	—	—	—	1	—
	105	39	—	—	—	—	2	—

Diphtheria Immunisation

Diphtheria immunisation is carried out systematically throughout the district by General Practitioners and County Medical Officers, in homes, schools and clinics.

Immunisation Statistics, 1959

<i>Age Group</i>		<i>Under</i>					5-9	10-14	<i>Total under 15</i>
		1	1	2	3	4			
Primary immns. completed during 1959	Dip.	126	14	9			4	1	154
	Wh/c	124	8	7			1	—	140
Re-inf. inj.s. administered during 1959	Dip.	—	—	57			102	1	160
	Wh/c	—	—	56			24	—	80
Total immunised child population at 31st Dec., 1959	Pre 1/1/55	—	—	—	—	—	114	571	685
	Post 1/1/55	51	91	87	99	129	618	99	1174

154 primary and 160 reinforcing immunisations against diphtheria were undertaken, compared with 107 and 189 respectively in 1958.

140 primary and 80 reinforcing immunisations against whooping cough were undertaken, compared with 84 and 97 respectively in 1958.

The total immunised child population is 1,174 compared with 1,285 in 1958.

Vaccination

Number of persons vaccinated (or re-vaccinated) during 1959:—

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Under 1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2-4</i>	<i>5-14</i>	<i>15 or over</i>	<i>Total</i>
Vaccinations	96	5	3	5	11	120
Re-vaccinations	—	—	2	4	13	19

120 primary vaccinations were undertaken compared with 92 in the previous year. Re-vaccinations rose from 15 to 19.

Vaccination is performed under the National Health Service by General Practitioners. Emergency clinics can be operated in the event of an outbreak of smallpox in county Health Clinics at Salisbury and Swindon. Vaccination propaganda is undertaken by the County Health Authority.

Food Poisoning

No cases of food poisoning were reported during the year.

National Assistance Act, 1948

SECTION 47: REMOVAL TO SUITABLE PREMISES OF PERSONS IN NEED OF CARE AND ATTENTION

It was not found necessary to obtain compulsory removal of any persons against their will from their homes.

This step is one that should only be considered after all the assistance that can be given by Home Helps, District Nurses, National Assistance Officers and Welfare Officers, etc., has failed to provide the care and attention needed.

REPORT

of the

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have pleasure in presenting my third Annual Report for this area. Whilst the hopes expressed in last year's report as to completing the Council's first five-year Sub-standard Housing Programme were not realised, progress was maintained in other directions, and certainly the Petroleum Storage situation is now nearly one hundred per cent satisfactory.

Again I must thank the Committee for their support, and all members of the staff for co-operation which is so essential in a small authority such as ours.

W. F. ACRES,
Public Health Inspector.

SUB-STANDARD HOUSING PROGRAMME

Action during the year under the Housing Act, 1957:—

Number of Inspections and Re-inspections	...	...	149
Number of Houses suitable for action—under Section 9 (repairs)	...	...	—
Number of Closing Orders served—under Section 17	...	...	5
Number of Demolition Orders served—under Section 17	...	...	4
Number of Undertakings accepted from Owners—under Section 16	...	...	1
Number of Houses deleted from the Schedule	...	...	2

At the end of the year, the position with regard to the Council's first five years programme commenced in 1956 was as follows:—

Total number of houses to be dealt with	...	102	
Demolition Orders served	...	...	37
Closing Orders served	...	...	14
Undertakings accepted	...	...	17
Action suspended	...	...	3
Repair notices	...	...	5
Deleted from Schedule	...	...	4
		Total	80

It should be noted that some figures referred to in the detail of action during 1959 refer to properties in the Further Five Year Programme. It was convenient to deal with certain properties owing to re-housing prospects and of the 55 houses listed, action in respect of 7 has been taken.

As to the completion of the initial Programme, the Council are proposing to acquire all the houses in the Coburg Square/King Street block, so that in the main, only the City area now requires to be dealt with during 1960.

It is also a pleasure to record that with the early completion of the Council's new Elderly Person's Bungalow Site, most of the tenants still living in houses condemned in the earlier stages of the Programme will be re-housed.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, 1936

(i)	Number of Inspections	...	...	...	65
	Number of Informal Notices served	...	...	...	13
	Number of Informal Notices complied with	...	...	...	12
	Number of Statutory Notices served	...	...	...	—

(ii) **Verminous Premises and Other Infestations**

No domestic premises were reported as being infested, but a successful treatment of a heavy infestation of fleas in a factory was carried out.

Apart from the usual calls for assistance concerning wasps nests, the department had numerous requests and took successful action in dealing with "cluster" flies in roof spaces. This may have been due to the hot season, but these pests seem to be on the increase, and severe infestations are most unpleasant to the householders concerned. Treatment is relatively simple.

(iii) **Caravan Sites**

The one caravan site licensed by the Council for a maximum of 45 vans was regularly inspected and no difficulties were encountered.

(iv) **Drainage and Sewerage**

The situation remains as previously reported and one can only repeat that from the Public Health aspect a sewer to serve the Southern end of Semington Road and the Caravan Site is most desirable.

(v) **Water Supply**

The water supplied by the Trowbridge and Melksham Water Board continued to be of satisfactory bacteriological standard.

RODENT CONTROL

The one part-time operator continued to deal with all complaints in a very satisfactory manner. The 63 treatments given involved 257 visits.

It was not possible to carry out a routine sewer treatment.

MILK AND DAIRIES

Licences issued under the Milk (Special Designation) Regulations at 31st December, 1959, were:—

Dealers' Licences, Tuberculin Tested	...	...	6
Dealers' Licences, Pasteurised	...	...	6
Supplementary Dealers' Licences, Tuberculin Tested	...	...	3
Supplementary Dealers' Licences, Pasteurised	...	...	3

During the year regular routine sampling of all milks retailed in the area was as follows:—

	<i>Pasteurised</i>	<i>T.T.</i> (<i>Pasteurised</i>)	<i>Raw T.T.</i>	<i>Totals</i>
No. of samples taken	23	17	7	47
Satisfactory	23	17	7	47
Unsatisfactory	—	—	—	—

Three samples of Raw T.T. milk at intervals taken for biological examination were all negative as regards *Brucella Abortus* and *Tubercle Bacilli*.

Results of bottle rinses at a local dairy whilst satisfactory in the main, did vary a little, and new plant has been installed.

FOOD AND DRUGS

(i) Inspection of Foodstuffs

No slaughterhouses are licensed in the area and inspection of meat and other foodstuffs is normally on request of traders and the occasional complaint from members of the public. During the year some 63 Condemnation Certificates were issued for a variety of carcase meat and offals, fish and tinned foodstuffs.

(ii) Ice Cream

Eight samples of ice cream were taken for examination at the Public Health Laboratories in Bath. Five were Grade I, two Grade II and one in Grade III. A satisfactory position. One further trade premises was, under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, licensed for the Sale of Ice Cream.

(iii) **Food Premises**

Twenty-eight inspections of premises, under the Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955, revealed no serious defects and in general a satisfactory state of affairs obtained. Minor infringements were dealt with informally.

CLEAN AIR ACT, 1956

No formal action was taken, but the occasional nuisance was dealt with informally. One factory will shortly be installing new plant and this will solve one of the few problems outstanding.

PET ANIMALS ACT, 1951

One licence was issued and no action necessary.

SWIMMING BATHS, ETC.

(i) **Blue Pool**

The new Council owned pool opened in June. Source of water is from the mains and constant re-circulation on a 6/8 hour turn-over basis is provided. Treatment of the water consists of filtration by twin Diafilters, followed by chlorination and aeration over a cascade.

Considerable attention was given to the chlorination in the early stages. The chlorination plant did not prove as effective under varying bathing loads as one could have hoped, but at least a safe level of chlorination was achieved and well over 100 spot samples were taken using our own comparator equipment.

In addition monthly samples were taken for full bacteriological examination at the Public Health Laboratories, and all seven such samples were perfectly satisfactory.

(ii) **Paddling Pool, King George's Playing Fields**

Supervision of this pool revealed a reasonably satisfactory degree of chlorination. Hand chlorination is employed.

(iii) **Shurnhold School**

The new swimming pool was opened in the Spring, and it was very disappointing to find that no filtration plant was installed and the rather out-of-date empty and fill system with hand dosing chlorination was used. I cannot regard this as a fool-proof system, but one must record that three bacteriological samples did prove to be perfectly satisfactory. Steps were taken to persuade the School Authorities to improve the situation and advice given as to how this could be done.

PETROLEUM (CONSOLIDATION) ACT, 1928

Again, considerable emphasis was given to this work in 1959, and I am indebted to the Chief Officer, Wiltshire County Fire Brigade for the following notes:—

“Progress has been maintained in the matter of bringing the licensed petroleum installations within the Urban District into line with the Council's requirements and apart from a large industrial installation in respect of which plans for complete replacements have now been finalised, it can be said that the installations are in good order.

Apart from the industrial installation mentioned above only one other is now left with a petrol storage tank in or under any closed building and, whilst this is technically not in accordance with the Council's requirements, the situation is not one which is considered serious.

In the past year one completely new installation has been installed for resale of petrol, two others have been extensively redesigned and in one other new tanks out of doors have replaced tanks beneath a building. All these installations have been the subject of the usual examinations by the County Fire Brigade Officers.”

The Council are indeed grateful to the Fire Prevention Officers for their co-operation in this work.

The number of licensed premises is still 24, involving a total gallonage of 114,000 gallons, a slight increase from 1958.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS (WASTE FOODS) ORDER, 1957

No premises exist in the town where licences are necessary, but smaller premises exist where swill is collected and boiled. Time did not permit any visits in this connection.

RENT ACT, 1957

Three applications were received for Certificates of Disrepair. One application was withdrawn, but in the other two cases, Certificates were eventually issued. Both were cancelled on completion of the works during the year.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

Action taken is shown on the table overleaf. It was found quite impossible to deal with the extensive inspections necessary to issue proper Certificates as to Means of Escape under Section 34, and the Council asked the Wiltshire County Fire Brigade to assist in carrying out the inspections. Co-operation to that end made good progress.

FACTORIES

Inspections

	<i>Number on Register</i>	<i>Inspections</i>	<i>Written Notices</i>	<i>Occupiers Prosecuted</i>
(1) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are enforced by Local Authority (non-power)	1	—	—	—
(2) Factories not included in (1) in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (power)	40	32	—	—
(3) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by Local Authority (excluding outworkers' premises) ...	1	—	—	—
Total .	42	32	—	—

Defects

	<i>Found</i>	<i>Remedied</i>	<i>To H.M. Inspector Referred</i>	<i>By H.M. Inspector</i>	<i>Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted</i>
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	—	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2)	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable Temperature (S.3) ...	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	—	—	—	—	—
Drainage of Floors (S.6)	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)	—	—	—	—	—
(a) Insufficient	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—	—
Total	—	—	—	—	—

Outworkers—Making wearing apparel (13-14) ... 4

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